



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

Air Force tech. sgt. sentenced to 10 years for producing child pornography

DENVER — An Air Force technical sergeant and convicted child pornographer was sentenced in U.S. District Court in Colorado to more than 10 years in prison on Monday, following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Erik Dean Rabes, 45, pleaded guilty in January to inducing and enticing a minor to engage in illicit sexual conduct for the purpose of producing child pornography.

Acting on leads, the Nebraska State Patrol and Air Force Office of Special Investigations executed a state search warrant in December 2004 at Rabes' residence in La Vista, Neb., looking for evidence of child pornography violations. They also seized Rabes' computer equipment. Subsequent forensic analysis of his computer discovered more than 30,000 illegal pornographic images of children.

In April 2005, the forensic results were provided to the Colorado Springs Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and ultimately to ICE special agents in Denver. Additional investigation by ICE agents led to the August 2005 federal grand jury indictment against Rabes in Colorado.

One of the images on Rabes' computer was identified as a known victim living in Colorado Springs, Colo. Further investigation by ICE, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Colorado Springs Police Department determined that Rabes' ex-wife had operated a day-care facility from their residence in Colorado Springs from December 1998 until December 2004. On Nov. 15, 2000, unknown to his ex-wife, Rabes engaged in illicit sexual activities with a young girl who attended the day care facility.

"Some child pornographers think they can hide their illegal activity on the Internet," said Jeffrey Copp, special agent-in-charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Denver. "But we identified and prosecuted an Air Force computer specialist showing that there's nowhere for them to hide. ICE works towards these stiff sentences to help deter the production and sale of child pornography.

Rabes was stationed at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs at the time of the offense. According to Air Force authorities, Rabes was then transferred to South Korea for a year, and then finally transferred to Offutt Air force Base Strategic Command where he worked as a computer security specialist.

Rabes still faces state charges in El Paso County, Colo., for child exploitation violations.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Habib Nasrullah, District of Colorado, prosecuted this case.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.